

**COUNTRY DATA: Netherlands : Information from the CIA World Factbook**

## INTRODUCTION

The Dutch United Provinces declared their independence from Spain in 1579; during the 17th century, they became a leading seafaring and commercial power, with settlements and colonies around the world. After a 20-year French occupation, a Kingdom of the Netherlands was formed in 1815. In 1830 Belgium seceded and formed a separate kingdom. The Netherlands remained neutral in World War I, but suffered invasion and occupation by Germany in World War II. A modern, industrialized nation, the Netherlands is also a large exporter of agricultural products. The country was a founding member of NATO and the EEC (now the EU), and participated in the introduction of the euro in 1999. In October 2010, the former Netherlands Antilles was dissolved and the three smallest islands - Bonaire, Sint Eustatius, and Saba - became special municipalities in the Netherlands administrative structure. The larger islands of Sint Maarten and Curacao joined the Netherlands and Aruba as constituent countries forming the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

## GEOGRAPHY

<b>Location</b>	Western Europe, bordering the North Sea, between Belgium and Germany
<b>Area</b>	<b>total:</b> 41,543 sq km <b>country comparison to the world:</b> <u>134</u> <b>land:</b> 33,893 sq km <b>water:</b> 7,650 sq km slightly less than twice the size of New Jersey
<b>Climate</b>	temperate; marine; cool summers and mild winters
<b>Natural Resources</b>	natural gas, petroleum, peat, limestone, salt, sand and gravel, arable land
<b>Total Renewable Water Resources</b>	89.7 cu km (2005)
<b>Freshwater Withdrawal</b>	<b>total:</b> 8.86 cu km/yr (6%/60%/34%) <b>per capita</b> 544 cu m/yr (2001):
<b>Natural Hazards</b>	flooding
<b>Environment</b>	water pollution in the form of heavy metals, organic compounds, and nutrients such as nitrates

al Issues	and phosphates; air pollution from vehicles and refining activities; acid rain
PEOPLE	
Population	16,847,007 (July 2011 est.) country comparison to the world: <a href="#">60</a>
Ethnic Groups	Dutch 80.7%, EU 5%, Indonesian 2.4%, Turkish 2.2%, Surinamese 2%, Moroccan 2%, Caribbean 0.8%, other 4.8% (2008 est.)
Religions	Roman Catholic 30%, Dutch Reformed 11%, Calvinist 6%, other Protestant 3%, Muslim 5.8%, other 2.2%, none 42% (2006)
Languages	Dutch (official), Frisian (official)
Literacy Rate	definition: age 15 and over can read and write total population: 99% male: 99% female: 99% (2003 est.)
Major Infectious Diseases	N/A
GOVERNMENT	
Type	constitutional monarchy
Independence	23 January 1579 (the northern provinces of the Low Countries conclude the Union of Utrecht breaking with Spain; on 26 July 1581 they formally declared their independence with an Act of Abjuration; however, it was not until 30 January 1648 and the Peace of Westphalia that Spain recognized this independence)
Constitution	adopted 1815; amended many times, most recently in 2002
Legal System	based on civil law system incorporating French penal theory; constitution does not permit judicial review of acts of the States General; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations
ECONOMY	
Agricultural Products	grains, potatoes, sugar beets, fruits, vegetables; livestock
Industries	agroindustries, metal and engineering products, electrical machinery and equipment, chemicals, petroleum, construction, microelectronics, fishing
Import commodities	machinery and transport equipment, chemicals, fuels, foodstuffs, clothing
Import Partners	Germany 17.16%, China 11.58%, Belgium 8.68%, US 7.77%, UK 5.72%, Russia 4.47%, France 4.4% (2009)

Export Commodities	machinery and equipment, chemicals, fuels; foodstuffs
Export Partners	Germany 25.54%, Belgium 12.49%, France 9.27%, UK 8.17%, Italy 5.07%, US 3.97% (2009)
Per Capita GDP	\$40,500 (2010 est.) <b>country comparison to the world: <u>18</u></b> \$40,000 (2009 est.) \$41,800 (2008 est.) <i><b>note:</b></i> data are in 2010 US dollars
Population below poverty line	10.5% (2005)

\*CITATIONS: All information included above is extracted from the CIA World Factbook except where noted.